February 19, 1997

To: National Committee delegates, branch convenors and labor organizers
From: Joe Sustar
Re: UPS Campaign

Dear Comrade:

Enclosed you will find the first *Socialist Worker* UPS Contract Bulletin. It is to be used in *SW* sales outside UPS locations. It should be stressed that the leaflet is not a substitute for selling the paper. Rather, it is an effort to link *Socialist Worker* to current and potential rank-and-file activists at UPS locations around the country. When you speak to UPS workers, be sure and ask about conditions and issues that could be the topic of future *SW* articles or an item in the Contract Bulletin. Some UPS workers have already met with ISO members outside work hours and expressed interest in the organization. In addition, UPS workers may be willing to distribute copies of the Contract Bulletin as well *Socialist Worker*.

Also included are two recent articles from TDU's *Convoy Dispatch* and excerpts from the Teamsters' Contract Campaign Kit. These can help provide the basis of branch discussion about the campaign as well as prepare the comrades who are selling outside UPS. Branches should arrange to get additional materials directly from the Teamsters and TDU.

Socialist Worker

UPS CONTRACT BULLETIN #1

Organizing to make UPS deliver

February, 1997

The UPS contract with the Teamsters expires on July 31, 1997. Teamsters General President Ron Carey campaigned for re-election on the promise to "make UPS deliver"—fighting to improve pay, pensions and working conditions for UPS workers, especially the part-timers who now make up 60 percent of the 173,000 Teamsters at UPS. The International Union has published results of a survey of 40,000 members and issued regular contract updates. Most important, the union has issued materials on how rank-and-file members can organize to put pressure on the company.

Unfortunately, many Teamster locals have not distributed this literature to the membership. But every UPSer needs to know that the Teamsters are demanding that UPS moves to:

Get rid of two-tier pay scales. In 1982, the old union leadership agreed to let UPS institute a two-tier pay scale that put starting pay at $8 or $9 per hour. Fifteen years later, that pay hasn't changed—but UPS's profits have gone through the roof. The company has made $4 billion in profits over the last four years. In 1995, CEO Oz Nelson was paid nearly $1.5 million. UPS can afford a raise that will provide a decent standard of living.

Create more full-time jobs for part-time workers. UPS used to promise full-time work to part-timers who stuck with the job. Now the company is using part-timers to eliminate drivers' jobs. In Michigan, part-timers assigned to air drivers as "jumpers" work as many as 35 hours a week without being considered full-time employees. Part-timers who work these hours should be made full-timers. And there should be faster a transition to full-time work for all part-timers.

Stop outsourcing Teamster jobs. The 1993 contract limited outsourcing—but UPS does not abide by the agreement. Feeder drivers in Iowa and elsewhere have lost hours while the company subcontracted work to other carriers. The company has also taken away work from the Teamsters by creating a new subsidiary, UPS Logistics Group, Inc., with 1,400 people. A November *Teamster Magazine* article says that "the long-term solution is stronger language in the national contract that penalizes UPS for subcontracting violations."

Increase pension benefits. The 1993 contract contained the largest-ever increase in UPS contribution to pensions. But many pensions remain substandard, especially those of part-timers. Ron Carey has called for improved 25 & Out and 30 & Out pensions as well as increased company contributions.

Improve health and safety. Since the 1994 safety strike, UPS has routinely violated the 70 lbs. limit on packages that are handled unassisted. The International Union has called for stronger language to enforce limits on over-70s. And there are many local issues, too. In New York City's Mid-Manhattan hub, management has ignored complaints about dust in sorter bins and excessive noise from compressors and other machinery. Package drivers are forced to work in older vehicles which are poorly ventilated and unsafe. UPSers need better health and safety issues at this level, too.

Resolve grievances on a timely basis. UPS supervisors regularly violate the contract—and tie up grievances for months or years. The International Union wants strict time limits on grievances written into the next contract. To show the company the union's resolve, rank-and-filers in each workplace will need to demand that their management moves on existing grievances.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN THE FIGHT TO MAKE UPS DELIVER:

General President Ron Carey and Teamsters Parcel Division Director Ken Hall have outlined a Teamster Contract Campaign Structure for UPS workers:

Local Union Contract Campaign Coordinators who are responsible for establishing coordinators for every location and shift.

Building-wide Contract Campaign Coordinators who should recruit work area coordinators to carry out one-on-one contact with coworkers.

Work Area Campaign Coordinators for every 20 workers, who contact workers individually about contract information and activities.

The union also call for escalating levels of action as the contract expiration date gets closer, to show the union's unity and strength.

Actions proposed for members are:

- Wearing the same color clothes on the same day
- Sending postcards to UPS management
- Wearing union buttons
- Presenting petitions to management
- Rallying at breaktime
- Entering or leaving work together in a group
- Holding informational pickets

If you haven't been getting copies of Teamster UPS Contract Update or the Contract Campaign Kit, contact your local. If you are unable to get the information from your local, write to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 25 Louisiana Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Additional information is available in Teamsters for a Democratic Union's *Convoy Dispatch*. Write TDU, Box 10128, Detroit, MI 48210.

This is the first in a series of contract bulletins from *Socialist Worker*, the biweekly newspaper of the International Socialist Organization, on sale regularly outside UPS locations. *Socialist Worker* will be featuring regular stories on UPS in the runup to the contract. If you have news and information about your location, contact your local *Socialist Worker* seller at the number below, or contact the paper directly by mail: *Socialist Worker*, P.O. Box 16085 Chicago, IL 60616, or by phone: (773) 665-8996.

To contact your local ISO Branch, call

Subscribe today! **Socialist Worker**
Paper of the International Socialist Organization

☐ U.S. First Class – $25 ☐ Canada and Mexico – $30
☐ U.S. Institutional – $40 ☐ Overseas Air Mail – $50

Name_____
Address_____
City_____ State_____ Zip_____
Telephone ( )_____
Send to: **Socialist Worker**, P.O. Box 16085, Chicago, IL 60616

ISO INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION

Socialist Worker

UPS CONTRACT BULLETIN #2

Let's flood UPS with grievances

April, 1997

Teamster General President Ron Carey has called on UPS workers across the country to file grievances for every management violation of the current contract. This will pressure UPS during negotiations for a new contract. The focus will be management violations of the 1994 safety agreements. Every Teamster at UPS has the right to:

- Refuse to handle any package over 70 pounds without assistance from another Teamster and proper lifting devices.
- Insist that all over-70 pound packages be properly labeled.
- Be free of harassment while enforcing these safety rights.

Your shop steward or business agent can provide a special "EZ" grievance form for over-70 violations. The *Part-Timers' Survival Guide*, compiled by UPSers in Northern California, explains what a grievance is and how to file one:

What is a grievance? A grievance is any unjust act, practice or condition which management has the power to correct. It may be a violation of the contract, a violation of state or federal laws or a violation of long standing work practice. You can get a copy of the contract from your shop steward or business agent.

What is the grievance form? It is a union form to spell out in specific terms, a problem which has or is occurring. It is a formal way to register a complaint and let management know about a problem and to aid in getting the problem resolved.

How do you write a grievance? Get all the facts after doing a thorough investigation of the problem. This must include the five W's: Who, What, Where, When and Why. Also, get statements from witnesses. Include times you tried to remedy the situation with management.

Ask your shop steward for assistance. The steward is there to help you. Article 4 of the contract states that stewards "shall be permitted reasonable time to investigate, present and process grievances" during working time. Research the contract the contract to find out what section has been violated. Write in clear, concise words on the grievance form the basic facts about what happened, explaining what management did or didn't do. Specify what remedy is sought and if it is an ongoing grievance, keep detailed records.

What are the most common grievances? (1) Handling over-70 pound packages unassisted. (2) Supervisors doing union work. (3) Unsafe conditions, such as dangerous machinery, falling packages or hazardous materials. (4) Verbal or physical harassment by supervisors, including racist or sexist comments. (5) Subcontracting drivers' work.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION ISO

The Teamsters have produced Contract Campaign materials for all UPSers. If you are unable to get the information from your local, write to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 25 Louisiana Ave. NW, Washington, D.C., 20001. Additional information is available in Teamsters for a Democratic Union's *Convoy Dispatch*. Write TDU, Box 10128, Detroit, MI 48210.

"Mr. Slade, the union grievance committee wants to see you."

This is the second in a series of contract bulletins from *Socialist Worker*, the biweekly newspaper of the International Socialist Organization, on sale regularly outside UPS locations. *Socialist Worker* will feature regular stories on UPS during the contract campaign. If you have news and information about your workplace, contact your local *Socialist Worker* seller at the number below, or contact the paper directly by mail: *Socialist Worker*, P.O. Box 16085 Chicago, IL 60616, or by phone: (773) 665-8996.

To contact your local ISO Branch, call

Subscribe today! **Socialist Worker**
Paper of the International Socialist Organization

☐ U.S. First Class – $25 ☐ Canada and Mexico – $30
☐ U.S. Institutional – $40 ☐ Overseas Air Mail – $50

Name_____
Address _____
City_____ State_____ Zip _____
Telephone (_____)
Send to: **Socialist Worker**, P.O. Box 16085, Chicago, IL 60616

ISO UPS Campaign Update #1

June 30, 1997

To: Branch convenors/UPS coordinators
From: Lee S.
Re: UPS update/using the *Socialist Worker* UPS supplement

Update: As reported in *Socialist Worker,* the Teamsters are calling for strike authorization vote at local meetings from July 6-13. Comrades should find out the time and place of these meetings, advertise them during our hub sales, and sell *SW* and the UPS supplement both before and after the local meetings. Enclosed is a petition which should be used at all UPS sales. It specifies key demands, which the Teamsters have so far been reluctant to do. Bring extra copies: we want to encourage people we meet to get signatures on the job and use it as an organizing tool. In addition, the Teamsters have signaled they may be willing to negotiate beyond the July 31 contract expiration. *However, we must assume that a strike is possible at that time and pace our work accordingly.*

So far, comrades have done excellent work on the campaign, which is a new undertaking for the ISO. The weeks ahead hold out even more exciting possibilities. Following is a summary of key points from the UPS meeting at Summer School:

1) Sell both the supplement and *Socialist Worker* every week. While the supplement should sell well, selling *SW* is essential to establishing political relationships necessary to work closely with workers the contract campaign, establish long-term contacts/*SW* readers and recruit UPSers to the ISO. In Chicago, 119 supplements were sold at two sales following Summer School. One sale totaled 85 supplements, 14 *SWs* and 14 names of workers interested in getting involved in the campaign. We should encourage workers to buy extra copies to distribute on the job. *Sales should be held weekly until the contract is settled.*

2) Orient to part-timers. About 128,000 of the 190,000 UPS Teamsters are part-timers. Their issues are central to negotiations. While they are far less integrated into the union than full-timers, they are also younger, politically open and angry at the company. Most work evening shifts. As a number of comrades noted at the Summer School UPS meeting, connecting with these workers is quite different meeting contacts on an *SW* street sale. After approaching workers with news about the contract campaign, ask a lot of questions, and listen closely to their issues on the job. The more details you learn, the more effective you'll be at relating to UPS workers and building political relationships with them.

3) Get copies of local contracts, supplements and riders. There are many issues decided at the local level. Some greatly effect working conditions. Get this information and make it part of your contract campaign discussions and literature.

4) Try to create a network of activists. This will be difficult, given many that part-timers have second jobs, etc. Large meetings are not likely; this will mean meeting one or two people a few minutes before or after a shift and encouraging them to take supplements, petitions, etc. But by making these contacts, you can help isolated militants find one another on the job to take up grievances, contract issues, etc., or, in a strike situation, help organize picket lines, etc.

5) Try to launch a shop contract bulletin. The more the national contract can be linked to local issues, the more effective organizing will be. The Teamsters have pushed this with the grievance campaigns. on over-70 packages and supervisors working. Every hub has many more issues. We should encourage contacts/recruits to write and distribute a shop paper and offer them technical/editorial assistance in producing it.

6) Prepare the branch for strike intervention now. Don't wait until a strike is called to: Centralize contract information in a secure place; schedule a rota of comrades to visit picket lines on a daily basis; locate a place for contact meetings. *Branches should be prepared to immediately circulate future* Socialist Worker *bulletins from the center regarding contract votes, forming strike committees, etc.*

7) Send weekly reports to the center. To get a national picture of the situation at UPS, we need regular information. Please report to the center each Friday (except July 4) from now until the contract is signed. *If possible, please send reports via a one-page fax to 773-665-9651.*

Note: from July 4 through July 20, Paul D. will be taking responsibility for the UPS campaign in the national office. Call him weekdays between 2pm and 6pm at 773-665-7337. After that date, contact Lee S. at 773-404-2536.

Socialist Worker

UPS CONTRACT BULLETIN #3

Be ready to strike UPS!

JUNE, 1997

The Teamsters contract with UPS expires July 31. But the company still hasn't bargained seriously. The Teamsters national bargaining committee suspended negotiations for several weeks in May until UPS negotiators finally called and asked to restart the talks. But UPS won't really negotiate until just before the deadline. Management is waiting to see if we are willing to fight for our demands – a raise for part-timers, more full-time jobs, better pensions, improved health and safety procedures, and more.

The *Contract Connection,* a newsletter put out by UPS part-timers in Detroit, recommends that UPSers take these steps to prepare for a strike. Here's what you can do:

- Get an additional hours at your other job(s). Many companies take on summer help.
- Hold off on big purchases until after the contract is settled, so there's no reason to vote for a bad contract just to make payments.
- Participate in the Contract Campaign as much as you can, wearing union T-shirts, passing out leaflets, and filing grievances over contract violations, especially over-70 violations and supervisors working. Your shop steward or business agent can provide a special "EZ" grievance form for those violations.

UPS supervisors nailed for racist, sexist harassment

The Oakland, Calif., NAACP has filed a lawsuit detailing racist policies by UPS managers throughout the West. But Black and Latino UPS workers everywhere will recognize the disgusting management tactics reported by the workers filing the lawsuit:

- *Assigning Black drivers to the most dangerous routes*
- *Refusing to remove racist graffitti or take action against racist supervisors*
- *Disciplining Black workers who complain about racism*

Since the lawsuit was filed in May, UPS management has tried to cover its tracks. In Washington, D.C., bosses distributed a leaflet asking workers to come forward with complaints. In San Francisco, they hired a psychologist to meet with workers to discuss problems of racism. But it backfired when workers said that management was to blame for racism on the job! Driver William Lewis, a 23-year veteran in San Bernardino, Calf., and a backer of the lawsuit said: "Racism at UPS is like humidity. You can't see it but you can feel it."

In Rockford, Ill., management dumped at least six supervisors at the air facility in May for sexual harassment. Unfortunately, officials of Local 710 had done nothing about the problem. Lisa Hopper, a feeder driver and shop steward in Local 710, says that the problem of sexual harassment is widespread at UPS: "This company doesn't like women working. They never have, and they never will. But we are here to stay."

ARE YOUR LOCAL OFFICIALS BACKING THE UPS CONTRACT CAMPAIGN?

Teamster President Ron Carey sent this electronic mail message May 15:

To: All UPS Local Unions
From: Ron Carey, General President

It has been brought to my attention that some local unions are not complying with the Teamster national negotiating committee's policy and strategy regarding the UPS contract negotiations.

The Teamsters UPS National Negotiating Committee has determined that member involvement in these negotiations is crucial to winning a successful contract. We know UPS will be inundating our members with company promotional materials. In order to keep our members well informed of our position on all issues, it is imperative that they receive all union materials as quickly as possible. Our committee has implemented a plan which calls for all local unions that have UPS members to distribute materials prepared by the Teamsters national negotiating committee to those members.

It is the responsibility of each and every local official representing UPS members to provide those members with the information they need to make informed decisions and to be an integral part of the contract negotiation process. Pursuant to my authority under Article VI, Section 2 of the International Constitution, I hereby direct all UPS local union officials to fully implement and carry forward the policy and plans of the Teamsters national negotiating committee with an emphasis on membership involvement and participation.

Thank you for your cooperation.

If you are unable to get information from your local, write to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 25 Louisiana Ave. NW, Washington, D.C., 20001, or Teamsters for a Democratic Union, Box 10128, Detroit, MI 48210.

This is the third in a series of contract bulletins from *Socialist Worker*, the biweekly newspaper of the International Socialist Organization, on sale regularly outside UPS locations. If you have news and information about your workplace, contact your local *Socialist Worker* seller at the number below, or contact the paper directly by mail: *Socialist Worker,* P.O. Box 16085 Chicago, IL 60616, or by phone: (773) 665-8996.

To contact your local ISO Branch, call

Subscribe today! **Socialist Worker**
Paper of the International Socialist Organization

☐ U.S. First Class – $25 ☐ Canada and Mexico – $30
☐ U.S. Institutional – $40 ☐ Overseas Air Mail – $50

Name_____
Address _____
City_____ State_____ Zip _____
Telephone (_____)
Send to: **Socialist Worker**, P.O. Box 16085, Chicago, IL 60616

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION

Socialist Worker
Paper of the International Socialist Organization
UPS Update #3 | August 5, 1997 | Labor donated

UPS SHOWDOWN

Workers show their power

WASHINGTON—Just hours after Teamster President Ron Carey called a strike at UPS here, thousands of workers took to picket lines across the U.S.

More than 200 members of Local 639 picketed the nearby Burtonsville, Md., hub at midnight Aug. 4 with spirited chants of "*Shut Down Big Brown.*"

In Austin Texas, more than 200 members of Local 657 picketed supervisor-scab drivers.

"*I deserve a full-time job, and you know it,*" one part-timer shouted at his supervisor.

Hours later, in Providence, R.I., nearly 300 members of Local 251 and their supporters blocked trucks—until police escorted the scabs through the lines.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, over 200 members of Local 174 picketed the downtown Seattle hub.

In just hours, Teamsters showed that a strike had the power to shut down one of the nation's most powerful companies.

Carey: Full-time jobs the key

TEAMSTER PRESIDENT Ron Carey declared on national television that the union is fighting for more full-time jobs for UPS workers.

"*America's future depends on good, decent jobs,*" Carey said in an Aug. 4 interview on PBS. "*That's what this is about.*"

Starting pay for part-timers has been frozen since 1982.

UPS negotiator David Murray claims that part-timers who **stay at the company for five years make $14 an hour. But three-quarters of UPS part-timers have been at the company less than four years!**

And management's offer of 10,000 full-time jobs for part-timers is a sham. Given UPS's growth rate, this works out to less than the number of full-time jobs created in the 1993-1997 contract.

On TV, Carey said, "*Working people have been taking it on the chin. Enough is enough.*"

That is why he should publicly name a figure for full-time jobs and mobilize UPS Teamsters to fight for it.

We need to beef up pickets

WHILE SOME UPS Teamster locals organized large, lively pickets on day one of the strike, picket lines in most cities were small.

Some of this was due to confusion over whether there would be a strike after the Teamsters and UPS negotiated past the July 31 deadline.

But in many locals, such as Iowa's Local 238, union officials limited the number of pickets.

They say this is because UPS may get a court injunction limiting pickets.

But even before the strike, UPS managers in Philadelphia got a friendly judge to prepare an injunction. After workers briefly blocked a scab truck, the judge issued the order within hours.

Some important recent strikes, like that of Teamsters and other workers at the Detroit newspapers, were needlessly lost after management was able to organize scab production.

Now UPS is trying to do the same thing.

But officials in Ron Carey's own Local 804 in New York told workers at the Maspeth hub on Monday to picket just 3 hours a week —so strikers left!

This only isolates strikers —and leaves them open to management pressure to cross picket lines.

Large, loud picket lines can send management a message that workers won't let bosses get away with scab operations this time.

Teamsters officials should strengthen union demands

THE TEAMSTERS released their pre-strike contract offer to UPS Aug. 4—and it is very low:

- A $2.60 raise for over four years—barely above inflation
- An additional $1 immediate raise for part-timers—when the company can easily afford $4 to help close the gap with full-timers
- 10,000 new full-time jobs over four years—but this would affect less than one in 10 part-timers. UPS should triple that figure
- A 50 cent raise in start pay—even though it has been frozen since 1982—along with the current 50 cent raise at seniority

The best Teamster demands are to make all air shuttle driving full-time, limit subcontracting for feeder drivers, and to prevent a UPS takeover of health and pension plans. Now that UPS has rejected the above offer, the union should use the strike to make them agree to a better deal.

UPS management's rotten con-trick offer

MANAGEMENT IS using the media to sell a contract offer full of givebacks, including:

- Profit-sharing bonuses to sugar-coat a lousy $3.00 pay raise for part-timers over five years—if they have more than four years seniority. The base start wage doesn't increase.
- A $1.50 raise over five years for full-timers—and a company takeover of the health and pension plans
- Greater use of part-timers in air delivery
- Elimination of the right to strike and the right to honor picket lines
- More subcontracting for feeder drivers

ISO Notes
UPS Strike Special Edition

****Please xerox and distribute to each branch member***

As comrades know, on Sunday the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) finally called a strike against United Parcel Service. Unfortunately, the union is doing so very reluctantly—and has spent the last week vacillating between attempts to strike a deal with UPS and issuing tough-sounding public statements, while making no genuine attempt to organize an effective strike. Only when the union had exhausted every possible alternative to a strike—including major compromises with UPS management—did Ron Carey finally announce that a strike would take place, at 10 p.m. Sunday, only two hours before the second strike deadline.

In sharp contrast to this indecisiveness on the part of the union leadership, UPS management made advance preparations throughout all aspects of its operations. Its public relations machine has flooded news services with false information, while its management quickly turned itself into a scabbing operation. UPS management is clearly out for blood. This alone should have motivated the union to mobilize its membership to take an active part in the strike.

But the IBT leadership (with the exception of a few locals) has done very little to involve the membership. Even a day into the strike, many UPS workers—especially part-timers—had yet to receive a phone call from the union officially informing them they were on strike. Many locals have yet to organize anything but the most basic picket line duty. And those which have seem intent upon preempting any possibility of unleashing workers' anger. Thus, a Queens local announced that each union member should plan to spend just three hours per week on the picket line and sent people home! One Iowa local voluntarily limited its pickets to four per gate, to avoid the possibility of an injunction!

In the weeks leading up to the strike deadline, this passivity on the part of the union leadership left a huge opening for socialists to argue for strike committees and to play a significant role in a few locals in helping to set them up and to politically prepare workers for stopping scabs. This is the reason why the ISO was able to sell such a large number of papers and supplements to UPS workers in recent weeks—and why so many workers are interested in talking to us about contract issues. Most workers who expressed a willingness to strike have felt extremely frustrated with the lack of information on the progress of contract talks and and the lack of leadership offered by the union. Thus, in the last few days of contract negotiations, the ISO's call for a "right to know" the progress of negotiations got a very positive reception from workers.

At the same time, however, the chaos at the top of the union leaves the mass of UPS workers ill-prepared for a strike. Most UPS workers have little or no experience of being on strike. Many workers don't know that according to trade union tradition, a picket line is supposed to be about stopping scabs, and they therefore don't automatically have a basis to challenge the union's insistence on passive picket lines. And the union has done precious little to counter the company's arguments, so many workers are confused about the particular arguments. For example, many workers echoed the company's argument that a strike could diminish UPS' market share permanently—which is highly unlikely, given that UPS is the giant among package delivery companies.

The UPS pilots' decision to honor the strike is a major step forward. But the strike has gotten off to a very weak start, and the union leadership is intent on running things in a top-down, undemocratic fashion. In this sense, Ron Carey's style of leadership varies little from past Teamsters' presidents. The union managed to quickly put out the word that no picketers would be allowed to try to stop scab trucks from crossing the picket line. This flies in the face of the entire trade union tradition. Just 18 months ago, Detroit newspaper workers organized mass pickets, in which workers sat down in the company driveway, and successfully stopped scab trucks. This spirit of trade unionism—which includes defying injunctions which seek to prevent mass pickets—is the key to turning the tide for the labor movement in the United States.

As a rule, however, the union officials' own conservatism makes them, by and large, profoundly threatened by the possibility of a large and militant picket line. They would prefer a game of bluff in which a handful of individuals from management and labor work out the details of an agreement with little input from the rank and file.

Red-Baiting

Their favored tactic is to red-bait or otherwise isolate those who challenge their preferred way of dong things. In the absence of struggle—especially given the legacy of McCarthyism in the United States—they are occasionally successful. But especially in the context of a strike situation, when the arguments about union democracy and solidarity and the need to stop scabs become very concrete for workers, red-baiting can be defeated. ISO members must remain confident in the face of red-baiting, *and we must stand up to it.* If we do, and we make concrete arguments, we can often win other militants to defending the ISO and socialists in general. If we don't, the atmosphere can quickly become quite ugly.

The arguments are straightforward. First, we should ask the person doing the red-baiting (including union officials) whether they are not confused about who the actual enemy is. After all, are they opposed to people who support the strike?

Second, we should not tolerate rumor-mongering and lies—a favorite tactic among red-baiters. For example, it is currently being circulated that the Chicago ISO tried to start a "wildcat" last Thursday night. This is after the lone union staffer who bothered to show up to the picket line declared just 20 minutes before the deadline that as far as he knew the local intended to strike at midnight. No one from the union told the crowd otherwise, so ISO members *along with a group of workers* began picketing at midnight. When the official told people to stop picketing, the ISO did. Comrades should not sit silently while red-baiting is taking place, but should have the confidence in our actions to challenge it.

Third, the way we must judge ourselves is not in relation to what union officials think of us (whether good or bad—which often changes depending on which way the wind is blowing). We must always keep in mind that, as revolutionary socialists, we are accountable to the rank and file only. We want to do everything we can to strengthen the confidence and organization of the rank and file. We are therefore *pro-union*. We want to strengthen the union's ability to win a strike, by building upon the strength of the union membership. Thus, if we are proven fighters on the picket line, red-baiting can actually polarize the situation, and bring militants to our defense. This has already happened on a couple of UPS picket lines, in which union militants have stood up for "the socialists".

For these reasons, the last thing we should do is become alarmed if and when we are red-baited. The experience has been that, in most cases, as long as we make it clear that we are there to help the union win the strike, we are able to disarm most red-baiters and force the rest to tolerate our presence.

What to Do During the Strike

Strikes on the scale of the UPS strike have been few and far between. This one, as we have argued for months, presents a tremendous opportunity for us. While our own size is small, our influence in some workplaces is much broader—including a central role in organizing strike committees in the last week. Thus, for the duration of the strike, all ISO members must devote themselves entirely to picket line duty and meetings with UPS contacts. This means you should cancel all your other plans during the strike if at all possible. It won't do, in other words, to miss a picket line because you are seeing a movie. A strike like this one will teach each and every member the lessons of class struggle that can't be gained from reading books. Members have the opportunity to learn a tremendous amount about class struggle in just a few short weeks. Moreover, we have an opportunity to begin to build a base among UPS workers—which could significantly change the scenario the next time a UPS contract comes up.

Make sure, however, that branch meetings don't fall by the wayside. If anything, they are more important during high levels of struggle. Branch meetings are the primary means by which members discuss and decide strategy in the struggle. Moreover, without branch meetings, there is probably no ISO activity to invite contacts to. So make sure branch meetings are well-planned and executed.

Whether this strike is long or short, or ends in victory or defeat, our goals are the same: 1) to help win the strike; 2) to recruit UPS strikers and contacts who we bring to the picket line; and 3) to build rank and file organization among UPS workers on the ground. During the strike, we should make sure to take every opportunity to hold informal discussions with UPS workers—at the bar or coffee shop, as individuals or in groups. Workers who are more developed politically are obviously ISO contacts. Others are potential rank and file activists. Some are both. Contact work should continue—and intensify—after the end of the strike.

We should spend the week after the strike ends meeting with UPS workers, as individuals and in groups, to try and win them to becoming long-term activists. And make sure you don't limit the focus of discussions to only UPS or the contract issues, but take up broader political questions as well. We should hold meetings to assess the strike. with the aim of winning groups of workers over to starting rank-and-file groups within their locals. Issues such as: demanding elected, not appointed, stewards; regular union meetings; voice votes rather than mail-in ballots on union contracts; etc. are concrete demands which make it clear what remains to be fought for after the strike is over.

This aspect of our work is crucial—and, given our small size is the main contribution we can make to the ongoing struggle at UPS. No matter what else we do—what petitions, or leaflets we hand out—the building of a rank-and-file base is central to our work.

Deciding What to Argue

There is no formula, or set of pat arguments, which determine what members should argue for on a given picket line. That can only be determined by answering the question, "What is the next step in this precise situation?" And the only way to answer this question is to gain an accurate understanding of the political mood and degree of confidence which exists at a given moment, as well as the balance of forces to carry it out.

Thus, in one situation, it might make perfect sense to shout, "Let's stop the trucks!" In another situation, it is a disastrous experiment in ultra-leftism. In many cases, we are limited by the sheer balance of forces. Any picket line of fewer than 50 can't possibly entertain the possibility of stopping trucks. So the argument must revolve around getting more numbers to the picket line. On the other hand, at a gate with 200 picketers, if the mood is right among the strikers and if there is a large enough group willing to lead the way, it would be a major missed opportunity to NOT argue to stop the trucks.

There is nothing worse than leaping in front of a truck, only to realize that no one followed. One way to avoid dangerous miscalculations is to test the waters *before* taking action. Most importantly, we have to ask questions, and listen carefully to what workers say.

Building Solidarity

One of most important aspects of our work during the strike is quickly pulling together solidarity messages and meetings, and fundraising from other unions. Many UPS strikers make only $55 a week in strike pay, making survival very difficult. This fact should be emphasized in order to raise the greatest possible contributions from unions and supporters. Every branch should be working now to pull together a solidarity meeting. Even if it is scheduled for next weekend and the strike ends beforehand, we can call it, "Lessons of the UPS strike."

We should contact everyone we know in the labor movement—especially those we have met through other strikes and struggles, such as Staley, Caterpillar, GE, or various local strikes. If you are a union member, raise support for UPS in your union. Every SW sale during the strike should feature petitions and signs about UPS. The whole of US society is watching the progress of the UPS strike on a daily basis. It is front-page news in every newspaper and the top story on every news broadcast. There is a hub in every city, and UPS drivers deliver everywhere. A Teamster victory could turn the tide for the labor movement. And just the fact that such a major strike is taking place at all has brought the issue of strikes and class struggle back into the mainstream.

National Committee Meeting

The ISO will hold a national committee meeting on Saturday, August 30 and Sunday, August 31. Every branch with five or more dues-paying members is entitled to representation, as long as dues are up-to-date. The delegate ratio is as follows: 1 delegate for 5-20 members; 2 delegates for 21 members or more. Branches which have just recently climbed to 21 dues-paying members should generally avoid sending a second delegate, unless the branch is clearly growing. Too often branches temporarily raise their numbers to 21, only to dip again after the meeting takes place. This unnecessarily costs the organization money. Each delegate who needs to fly will be reimbursed for the cheapest available plane fare. The next issue of *ISO Notes* will include a tentative agenda.